



Pacific Northwest Region
Malheur National Forest
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Forest Feature

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Harney County Restoration Collaborative Brings Diverse Stakeholders Together

Efforts are crucial to the increased pace and scale of restoration on the Malheur National Forest

JOHN DAY, PRAIRIE CITY, AND HINES, ORE. – Harney County, like many rural communities in the western United States, has a natural resource based economy and is the home of important wildlife habitat and beautiful landscapes. These rural communities often struggle to maintain a balanced approach to the ecological, economic and social components that sustain their communities. This includes protecting natural resources while maintaining family wage jobs, funding schools, and providing public safety and adequate health care. These competing values often create divisions and conflict about public lands and resource management.

In 2008, in response to the need to increase the pace and scale of restoration in Eastern Oregon, the Harney County Restoration Collaborative (HCRC) was formed to bring parties together to address issues on the Southern portion of the Malheur National Forest.

“Collaboration is hard work. It takes time and patience. You have to be willing to not only listen but to understand and then find a way your personal goals can meld with the goals of a larger group. As hard as collaboration is I think the progress we make with collaboration and by seeking consensus is durable – we don’t make pendulum swing changes from one side of an issue to another but steadily improve and revise until we have principles we can agree on.” says Jack Southworth, Local Rancher and member of the HCRC.

An integral part of many partnerships is the collaborative process, the goal of collaboration is to build and promote a collective vision for how to manage the land. Through collaboration, groups that may disagree are able to explore their differences, identify common interests and seek common-ground solutions.

“An incremental approach like that must sound out dated in this time of political chest-thumping but when I compare collaboration to the paralysis I see in our congress or having our natural resources managed by judges decrees then I think the ongoing work of local citizens working together to make our communities better places to live, our local businesses more sustainable and the Malheur National Forest healthier; I think collaboratives are part of something pretty effective.” Southworth added.



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In Harney County, collaborative efforts have brought together ranchers, local government, federal and state agencies, tribes, environmental organizations, civic leaders and others in the spirit of understanding and problem-solving. Stakeholders do not always agree on every issue, but they have worked hard to listen, to learn from one another, and to find very significant opportunities to move forward together.

“The High Desert Partnership is pleased to support the Harney County Restoration Collaborative and believe the successes of forest restoration projects implemented in the Southern Malheur National Forest have been important to the emergence of a part of a broader shift in how the local community has worked with state and federal agencies and conservation interests to resolve contentious issues that have in the past been characterized by conflict and controversy.” states Brenda Smith, Executive Director of the High Desert Partnership.

Landscape Scale Restoration efforts on the Malheur National Forest are creating ecologically diverse forest ecosystems and increasing economic capacity by supporting existing and emerging markets.

For more information on the collaborative efforts on the south zone of the Forest, please visit www.highdesertpartnership.org and <http://www.fs.usda.gov/malheur/>.

The mission of the Forest Service, part of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, is to sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of the Nation's forests and grasslands to meet the needs of present and future generations.

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